

symmetry of the plan, and the harmony of the general appearance would all have gained by it.

There has been a great dispute as to whether there was a style proper to represent the character and taste of the English nation at the present time, and I ask why not? Is not the style of this colossal monument as serious as the people itself? The dimensions of the façade in general, and the details in particular, are surely in harmony with each other. Would you have preferred the peristyles of a temple to Diana or to Jupiter or to Venus, to the halls of your ancestors, for a national monument in your atmosphere of clogs and great coats? Is not the kind of architecture in harmony with that of the neighbouring Westminster Abbey? Yes, without doubt, but (perhaps somebody may reply) why always copy or imitate our predecessors? But this is altogether natural, because our age has no architecture of its own. And who shall give it? We are very anxious to see him. But only one person? I do not think so. I believe that time will give us this, for time destroys and returns every thing. But when? Who shall say? We move quickly in these times. We go by steam; but a new style of architecture will not be invented by steam; be sure of that, unless by hazard you imagine that the envelope of the Exposition will furnish one.

Except in some streets and squares at the west end, the private houses are in general built without elegance, of bad bricks of a very unequal yellowish red colour: the colour does not matter much, since the smoke from the coals furnishes an imperceptible but gray rain to the town, which covers everything with one tint, that is, a dirty black, which attaches itself to everything inside as well as outside, and renders wretched every person who scrupulously looks for cleanliness. You are establishing many bath-houses for the public good: this is all very well for the body; but washhouses for your buildings, how are they to be managed? The distribution of the houses in London is very mournful: lit by a small number of little windows, winter, of course, gives long nights and short days to the capital of the world; but as gas is introduced every where, light of some sort is not wanting. The Squares are arranged with much taste, but as the plants in the gardens want freshness, they cannot be what they should. The Parks are large, capably arranged for public amusement in a very judicious manner, but in general want shade, and are at too great a distance from the city, so that the very people who most want fresh air cannot get to it. The Inner Temple Gardens are the only ones, and are not sufficient. The streets of the west end, and in general all the newly constructed ones, are perfect in their proportions, pavements, and roadways. Those of the city are much too narrow for the traffic of these days, but what can be done? These streets were made for a population of 600,000, and not for one of 2,600,000 souls. If Fleet-street could be joined by a straight line through Paternoster-row with Cheapside, and if Cornhill, Leadenhall-street, Fenchurch-street, and Gracechurch-street could be enlarged, I guess that the traffic would be considerably improved: the wood pavement, as deadening the sound, pleases me very much, but I should have thought that the form of the blocks might have been more judiciously contrived to give a firmer hold to the horses' feet: I have just been told that the Government has announced its intention of macadamising the whole town; so that the wood and stone paving will both disappear: this, if an advantage to the ears, will be a great detriment to the feet.

All that regards domestic offices is so perfect in London, that I am astonished that the architectural police has not thought of establishing every where *lieux d'aisance en forme circulaire*. Here and there something may be found, but the distribution is not good, and the number far too small.

The supply of water is a subject too important and too vast for this letter. Hereafter I may trouble you upon it. Eight or nine companies supply the greater part of the town with river water, at heights convenient for

domestic purposes, but it is generally too soft for drinking, and wants the vigour of spring water. We find in London several fountains, or rather public pumps, but still not in a sufficient number for so large a city: still, they are public in the largest sense of the word, as we find an iron ladle attached to each for the use of the thirsty. I saw some chained up!

The railways, which abut upon the four sides of the city, could not be adapted to the roads, on account of the immense circulation; and therefore pass above them by means of bridges, so that—after a sort—you have begun to build one town upon another: the construction of these bridges, part in brick, part in iron, is very remarkable, and some are really very pretty, others as bad, while some are positively curiosities. As to the principal buildings of the stations, those which I have seen are far from pretty, and as I have not yet had time to see the others, I must leave this subject.

I have visited, and must speak of them, the workshops of Messrs. Thomas and William Cubitt, the builders. The establishments of these brothers are the most extensive of the sort that I have ever seen, and I imagine that they have no rivals but each other. It is clear that these gentlemen are very enterprising; the one in railway works, and the other in building a new town in Pimlico: but as your city is the Nineveh of this age, it is here only that these gigantic works can be executed.

It is impossible to consider in detail the hospitals; asylums, prisons, docks, and many other large buildings in London. The domestic arrangements of these institutions are doubtless meritorious, but in the history of architecture they would tell as shapeless masses, excepting the prison of Newgate, which has its character so decidedly pronounced as to give a goose-skin to the passenger: but we will pass it hurriedly for a spectacle more agreeable—more delightful—let us go to the Exposition.

The Exposition! So much has been said and written in its praise, that I am afraid of saying nothing but what has been repeated ten times already, if I were to speak of it in general, but I only wish to call your attention to it as far as regards architecture. In this great parallelogram of 1,851 feet long, 408 feet wide, and 108 feet high in the transept, a building? I think not. I call a building a construction made to resist the seasons and the weather. Can the Exposition do this? To paralyse the sun's effects, and not to be roasted in summer, it has been necessary to cover the roof with canvas; and when winter comes with its snow, hail, and storms, we shall see the effect and perhaps the ravages which it will make in the Crystal Palace. As to weather, the inventor talks of its capability of standing fifty years. That is possible, but the repairs must be frequent and expensive. Experience seems to teach us that for the moment there is no danger, but as the columns of the great nave, although they support three stories, are only of the same diameter as all the others, I fear for the future. Without doubt construction in iron is different from that in brick or in stone; but there exists a maxim which knows no change,—viz., that the bottom should be heaviest and the top lightest. But it is currently reported that the building is to be removed. Although I have mentioned it last, the first visit after my arrival was to the Exposition. The exterior did not strike me. If you ask why? I cannot explain. Either the height is too small for the other dimensions, or the trees spoil the general effect, or the total want of profiles to give what we call relief or *chiaroscuro*, or the blue and white colouring for the columns, with brown panelling, hardly appropriate to the exterior of any building, may be the cause. I cannot tell. Perhaps I am wrong, but I think that a plain grey or yellow stone colour would have told better against the blue of the sky, and the green of the trees and turf. The commission must have fancied that a large mass of blue was not good, and therefore used the deep brown colour with which the wooden panels are decorated. Why should not this great quantity of wood (in a construction

generally stated to be of glass and iron) have been masked. In the exterior nothing struck me but the nave, on account of the boldness of its construction, and the grandeur of the idea. On entering the first glance is dazzling. The endless perspective, the sea of light above and of people below, the thousands upon thousands of beautiful and precious objects, arranged with admirable taste, all combine in one magnificence, which subdues the mind in a moment. I do not propose to myself to speak of everything which I considered remarkable in this giant exposition, nor even of the things relative to our own profession. I have seen models of bridges, of triumphal arches, of churches, houses, and other very interesting monuments; I have seen beds, sideboards, chairs, bookcases, vases, and consoles admirably carved; I have seen a thousand details perfect in taste and execution, but I have sought in vain for a principle or form in architecture which was not known before.

In the interior, the blue and white painting is more *à propos*, and the mass of red drapery used as coverings for the tables and pedestals is perfectly in harmony with the colour of the architecture. The light thrown upon the objects is not advantageous. In order to get a good light for objects of industry as well as of art, we want a light of about sixty-five degrees, as this is the best for seeing and being seen. We have a proverb "Too much is as bad as nothing," and this applies to the light at the Exhibition: there is no shadow for objects of relief, and they consequently want effect. The eye can find no place of repose, and the visitor leaves the building dazzled rather than satisfied.

Nevertheless we must give due honour to those who have contributed to this great and unique enterprise; and if the Crystal Palace may not be considered as a model of architecture in what regards beauty and solidity, as envelope of the Exposition it has great merit. Without doubt, a more elegant and prettier architecture (for example, Moresque or Etruscan, which are the most suitable) might have been chosen for construction in iron, but the expense and time—where were they to be found? This was the question at the moment that the commission had to decide. To do justice, it must be confessed that Mr. Paxton, as inventor, and Fox and Co. as constructors, have shown great spirit, talent, and invention in planning this temporary but grandiose building upon the turf of Hyde-park.

As we have seen that our time has no architecture, and that the envelope of the Exposition has not given us a new one, I have asked myself whether the receipts, which surpass the expenses of the work, might not be really useful to our arts as well as to the sciences and industry, by forming a capital the surplus whose interest should furnish annual premiums from 100l. to 2,000l., either in competition or as single works, for nations. Why should not this be adopted? The Exposition, and through it, the surplus the fruit of the daily and nightly study and labour of men of all classes in every country. Thus we have a treasure which all the world might justly claim for those who have created the capital. I think that every artist and artisan, every man of liberal education as well as the ignorant, would applaud such a resolution as that I have proposed, and that there would be a confirmation of the motto *Vox populi vox Dei*.

SERVAAS DE JONG.

CLASSIFICATION OF MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE.

I HAVE been travelling in France for more than two months endeavouring to complete an undertaking I have now had in hand for some years, and which may be briefly described as "An Architectural Tour in the English Provinces of France." I find that during the absence Mr. Sharpe, of Lancaster, has thought proper to publish in THE BUILDER a base and libellous attack upon me by name, and upon my publications in general. I have